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Title: Need to implement the Right to Information Act, 2005 in right earnest.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (DURGAPUR): The Right to Information Act was first introduced in the Indian Parliament in July 2000. It came into effect on 12 October 2005. Under the law the information has become a fundamental right of the citizen. Under this law all Government bodies or Govt, funded agencies have to designate a Public Information Officer (PIO). The PIO's responsibility is to ensure that information requested for is disclosed to the petitioner within 30 days and within 48 hours in case of information concerning the life and liberty of a person.

I raised this issue under rule 377 on 18.12.2006 in Lok Sabha but still I have not received any answer from the Govt.

A number of high profile disclosures revealed scams in Public Distribution System (ration stores), disaster relief, construction of highways, defence purchase, construction of Airports, non-implementation of 100 days work specially in model village and other villages of Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh). The law itself has been hailed as a landmark in India's drive towards more openness and accountability.

However, the RTI has certain weakness that hamper its implementation. The lack of a Central PIO makes it difficult to pin-point the correct PIO to approach for requests. In the State of Maharashtra it was estimated that only 30% of the requests were actually realized under Maharashtra Right to Information Act. The law also bars disclosure of information that affects national security and matter that are deemed to be of national interest.

I, therefore, urge upon the Govt, to implement the RTI Act as per set guidelines.